

Policy Title: **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The freedom of faculty to present the truth as they understand its relationship to their area of competence, consistent with state-wide or FVTC course curriculum is essential to the purpose of the College and society.

FVTC encourages teaching, investigation, and reflective thought in an atmosphere of freedom. This philosophy is based on the belief that when students have the opportunity to learn and acquire knowledge from a variety of sources and opinions in an atmosphere of honest and open inquiry, they will develop a greater knowledge and maturity of judgment. Accordingly, it is anticipated that in the course of their instructional duties faculty will discuss potentially controversial issues that impact an occupational field or academic discipline. Faculty and students who participate in those discussions are expected to respect diverse opinions and refrain from any political, religious, or ideological indoctrination. However, faculty are responsible for ensuring there is no insertion or intrusion of material that has no relation to the subject matter of their instruction. Faculty teaching the same course often collaborate on learning materials and activities, assessment strategies, and other aspects related to teaching the course. Reasonable consistency requirements, as determined by an instructional team, does not violate academic freedom. All faculty teaching the same course need to use the same textbook and course materials purchased by the students.

When faculty speak or write as citizens outside of the College, they are free from administrative and College censorship and discipline. They should also recognize that their special position in the community imposes special obligations. Therefore, faculty are expected to remember that their statements may be a reflection on their profession and on the College. Additionally, faculty have the responsibility to clarify the fact that they speak as an individual and not on behalf of the College. Academic freedom should not be utilized as a shield for faculty who do not want to be evaluated on their teaching, nor should it prevent them from presenting their own views in addition to the course outline.

The principles of academic freedom will not prevent FVTC from making proper efforts to ensure the best quality instruction for all students, nor will academic freedom prevent compliance with state and federal law, accreditation requirements or standards, or College policies.

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